RECLAMATION

Managing Water in the West

Colorado River:

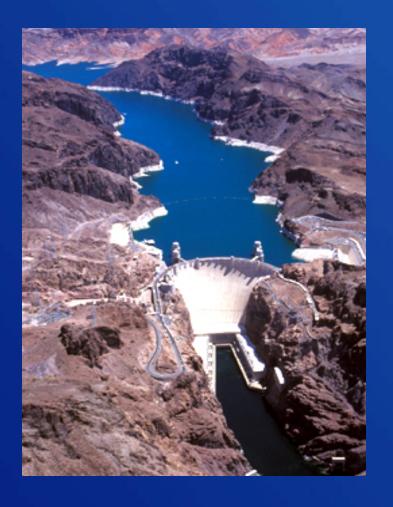
Lower Basin Shortage Guidelines and Coordinated Reservoir Operations Strategies Project

2007 AOP Consult Meeting Draft Project Alternatives June 16, 2006



U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Reclamation

Project Overview



- Drought
- Scoping
- Key Considerations
- Proposed Action
- Draft Alternatives
- Consultations
- Schedule

Drought Conditions

- Drought conditions have impacted storage in the Colorado system
- To date, there has never been a shortage in the Lower Basin and there are currently no shortage guidelines
- Lower Basin shortage guidelines and coordinated reservoir operations strategies are needed to:
 - provide a degree of certainty for water users in the Lower Basin with regard to future water supplies;
 - delay the onset and magintue of shortages; and
 - maximize the protection afforded to water supply, hydropower production, recreation, and environmental benefits by water storage in Lakes Powell and Mead

Scoping

- May 2005 –Secretary directed Reclamation to engage in a process to develop guidelines for Lower Basin shortages and the operation of Lakes Powell and Mead under low reservoir conditions
- Summer 2005 Solicited public comments on proposed content, format, mechanisms and analysis
- Fall 2005 Announced intent to initiate NEPA process, solicited public comments on scope and alternatives development
- March 2006 Federal Register Notice of Scoping Summary Report and refinement of scope

Key Considerations Identified

- Importance of encouraging conservation of water
- Importance of considering reservoir operations at all operational levels
- Interim nature of operational guidelines

Elements of Proposed Federal Action

- Shortage strategy for Lake Mead and the Lower Division states
- Coordinated operation of Lakes Powell and Mead
- Mechanism for the storage and delivery of system and non-system water in Lake Mead (programmatic element)
- Proposed modification/extension of the existing Interim Surplus Guidelines

Draft Alternatives

- No Action
- Basin States
- Conservation Before Shortage
- Water Supply
- Reservoir Storage

Consultation and Cooperation Efforts

- Basin States
- Non-Governmental Organizations
- Tribes
- Republic of Mexico
- Cooperating Agencies

Project Schedule

 Summer 2005 Solicited public comments on content, format, mechanisms and analysis to be considered to address drought and other management

challenge

Fall 2005 Announced intent to initiate NEPA process and

solicited public comments on scope and

alternatives development

March 31, 2006 Scoping report published

June 2006 Proposed alternatives will be published

July 2006 Initiating resource analysis

December 2006 Draft EIS will be published

September 2007 Final EIS will be published

December 2007 Record of Decision will be issued

